UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1994/79
16 June 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC/CHINESE/ ENGLISH/FRENCH/ SPANISH

Substantive session of 1994
27 June-29 July 1994
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

Cooperation in fisheries in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General

In its resolution 1992/54 of 31 July 1992, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its substantive session of 1994, a report of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), working in cooperation with the other relevant organizations and in close consultation with the Acting Chairman of the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean, on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution and on the outcome of the third session of the Conference, which was to be held in Cape Verde in 1993. The report of the Director-General of FAO is annexed to the present note.

* E/1994/100.

Annex

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON COOPERATION IN FISHERIES AMONG THE AFRICAN STATES BORDERING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

1. This report has been prepared by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in consultation with the Chairman of the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (hereafter referred to as the Ministerial Conference) in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/54 of 31 July 1992 entitled "Cooperation in fisheries in Africa". It supplements the report of the Director-General made available to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1993 on this same subject.

2. In its resolution 1992/54, the Council welcomed the progress achieved in implementing the cooperation programmes of the Ministerial Conference and invited the Conference to intensify its activities with a view to ensuring the sustainable development of fishery resources, in particular through the adoption of effective norms in the areas of fisheries planning and management, statistics, marine scientific research and for the continued monitoring and protection of marine resources in the region. The Council also reiterated its appeal to the international community, the organizations of the United Nations system, donor countries and regional financial institutions to contribute generously to the implementation of the Conference programmes and projects. The Director-General of FAO was to prepare a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution and on the outcome of the third session of the Ministerial Conference, which was to be held in Cape Verde in 1993.

3. However, the third session of the Ministerial Conference was postponed and is now scheduled to be held in Praia, Cape Verde, before the end of 1994. The Director-General of FAO stands ready to report on the outcome of that session to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995.

4. The first session of the Ministerial Conference was convened in 1989 in Rabat at the invitation of the Government of Morocco. The Conference adopted the Rabat Declaration, in which all African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean expressed their common will to strengthen and develop cooperation in fisheries matters. The Conference also set up a follow-up committee, composed of a limited number of States, to monitor activities during the intersessional periods. The first session of the Follow-up Committee was held in Rabat in May 1990.

5. At its second session, held in Dakar in July 1991, the Ministerial Conference adopted the Regional Convention on Fisheries Cooperation among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The Director-General of FAO is depositary of the Convention. The Convention will enter into force with the deposit of the seventh instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The Convention has been signed by the Governments of Cameroon,

Cape Verde, Congo, the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo and Zaire. At present, it has been ratified by the Governments of Guinea and Senegal; the Governments of Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone have deposited their instrument of accession with the Director-General.

6. In its resolution 1991/73, the Economic and Social Council took note with satisfaction of the convening of the Conference and welcomed the adoption of the Convention. In response to a request from the Chairman of the Ministerial Conference that FAO provide interim support, pending the establishment of a permanent secretariat, the Director-General of FAO approved the funding of a project (TCP/RAF/2253) for this purpose. The project became operational in May 1992. A major activity of the project was the organization of a legal and institutional workshop in Praia, Cape Verde in July 1993, which examined issues relating to different options for the establishment of the permanent secretariat. The report of the workshop will be presented to the Conference of Ministers for decision at the third session.

7. Another major activity was the organization by FAO, with funding from the FAO/Norway/Cooperative Programme, of a regional workshop on fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance for African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean in Accra, Ghana in November 1992. This was in response to resolution CONF/1/91 adopted at the second session of the Conference regarding assistance for combating illegal fishing in the region. The Follow-up Committee, at its second session (Dakar, December 1992) endorsed the recommendations of the workshop.

8. A workshop to formulate guidelines on how to develop a regional maritime database (BDRM) to meet the requirements of the member States, was organized in Dakar in February 1993 with support from the European Community (EC) and FAO project TCP/RAF/2253. Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop, the BDRM Programme was formulated and submitted to the EC, which has expressed, in principle, an interest in funding it. The Programme comprises the following three components: (i) development of the Geographical Information System and related training of national staff, to be executed by FAO; (ii) development of the user-interface, to be executed by the University of Warwick (United Kingdom); (iii) training in fishery resources evaluation, to be executed by the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management.

9. The Regional Fishery Law Advisory Programme, formulated by FAO and endorsed by the Follow-up Committee at its second session, provides advice to the Ministerial Conference, subregional bodies and individual countries of the region on the legal aspects of fisheries cooperation, management and development. The Programme (GCP/RAF/302/EEC, financed by the EC and executed by FAO, was approved for a period of three years. The Programme is based in Dakar and has been operational since May 1994. It is also supported by two bilateral donors through the financing of posts for associate professional officers supporting the project.

10. The progress achieved with regard to other project proposals formulated, inter alia, by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), FAO and other organizations of the United Nations system, and proposals which are still under consideration by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other donors, will be reviewed during the third session of the Ministerial Conference in the latter part of 1994.